

## REMARKS

There remains pending in this application claims 1-26, of which claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11, 15, 17, 20, 22, 24, and 25 are independent. No claims have been added or cancelled.

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, favorable reconsideration together with entry of those amendments and allowance of the above application is respectfully sought.

The invention as now featured in each of independent claims 1, 2, 7-9, 11, 15, 17, 20, 24, and 25 is featured in that the surface of an electrode which faces in a direction of a thickness of an absorption belt is in contact with a first absorption layer, the surface of the electrode which faces in a direction perpendicular to the direction of the thickness of the belt is in contact with an insulating layer, the electrodes on the insulating layer are arranged alternately with each other in a direction perpendicular to the direction of the thickness of the belt, and a volume resistivity of the insulating layer is larger than that of the first absorption layer.

As a result of the above combination features, the shortest path between adjacent electrodes is taking up with the insulating layer having a larger volume resistivity, and a current will easily flow from the first layer having a smaller volume resistivity and in the shortest path of the adjacent electrodes. Consequently, leaking of the current from the electrode and flowing of the current in the shortest path between the adjacent electrodes can be suppressed by the insulating layer. This is advantageous because it suppresses degradation of the belt by the leakage current and decreases electric power consumption. Such features and advantages are neither taught nor suggested by the applied art.

Applicants' invention as recited in each of independent claims 7-9, 15, 20, and 24 provides for an insulating layer sheet having a plurality of openings and for disposing an electrode sheet with respect to each of the openings in the insulating layer sheet. Such features are neither taught nor suggested by the applied art.

Independent claim 22 has been amended so as now to recite that an electrode is disposed outside one of a first surface to which the object is absorbed, and a second surface opposite to the first surface, and the electrode is disposed outside of the other of the first and second surfaces. Again, such features are neither taught nor suggested by the applied art.

The remaining claims not heretofore discussed are dependent claims which depend either directly or indirectly from one of the above-discussed independent claims. Accordingly, each of those claims is patentable for reasons noted above with respect to the independent claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that this application is placed in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration together with entry of the above amendments and early passage to issue of the above application is respectfully sought.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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